

It's the Gas Prices Stupid! Op/Eds on GOP Energy Offensive:

Congressman Joe Pitts partnered with Congressman Phil English to jointly pen an op/ed for Townhall about the discharge petition on Rep. Pitts' oil refinery bill. *"The American people must be rightly furious that Congress continues with their business as usual, as if families aren't paying \$70 to fill up their minivans so they can drive to work, or take their kids to soccer practice. ... We have teamed up to offer a discharge petition... that would expand our domestic oil refining capacity by setting aside three closed military bases to use as sites to build new refineries. A new refinery has not been built in the United States since 1976, and the refineries that we do have are operating at or near capacity. ...The time has come to make the investments in our nation's energy infrastructure to help reduce our dependence on foreign oil. ...However, even if we were to produce more oil, we simply do not have the capacity to refine it in order to turn it into the fuel we use to power our cars and trucks. ...H.R. 2279 would address one of the largest hurdles to building a new refinery: finding land. It would direct the President to designate three closed military bases as suitable for the construction of an oil refinery. ...It is unfortunate that Republicans have been forced to use procedural motions to force Congress's hand on the energy issue, but the stakes are too high. The American people are sick and tired of a Congress that cannot seem to address an issue that is so negatively affecting families across the country,"* they wrote.

Communicator of the Week
Rep. Michele Bachmann
educates Chairman Charlie
Rangel on the AMT on CNBC:

"We don't need the \$61 billion (AMT revenue). We can cut government spending by that amount. I'm a first term, and there's one thing that I've seen here. It's so easy to spend other people's money. Congress wastes money like the American people wouldn't believe. It's shameful."

Congressman Gresham Barrett wrote an op/ed for the Greenville News about the need for a new American energy policy. *"Right now America has an energy portfolio that is critically out of balance. While our dependence on oil increases -- and supply decreases -- we have failed to address how we can bring sanity back into the process and bridge where we are today versus where we want to be in the future. ...The result is we are paying the highest energy costs this country has ever seen. ...I have been working with Rep. Steve Buyer for months and we, along with other members, introduced H.R. 6001, the Main Street USA Energy Security Act of 2008. By putting forth a comprehensive energy plan that bridges the gap between our needs today and in the future, it recognizes that energy security and independence go hand in hand. The Main Street Energy Act will help to increase domestic refining capacities and streamline the refinery permit process... will address the country's growing need for oil and natural gas. It authorizes the Department of Interior to grant leases for oil and natural gas exploration... supports coal-to-liquid technology... supports renewable energy tax credits, research and development in biomass, and ethanol technologies, and it gives incentives to renewable energy projects such as wind, solar and geothermal. ...We have come to realize that petroleum is our energy of the past. One day, we will read about it in books and will wonder how and why we used it for so long. Until then -- it gives us a bridge to get us to our new energy resources. One that will not cost \$5, \$6 or \$7 a gallon. Even though we are 30 years behind on an action plan -- the future is closer than you think,"* wrote Barrett.

One Minute, Morning Hour, and Special Order Participation

On June 17-23, 17 RSC Members delivered one-minute speeches, continuing the House GOP's massive push for Members to discuss raising gas prices and the Republican solution to increase American energy supplies. The following Representatives all took part: Reps. Ted Poe, Joe Wilson, and Randy Neugebauer each spoke twice. Rep. Pitts; Rep. Foxx; Rep. Shimkus; Rep. Barrett; Rep. Westmoreland; Rep. Davis; Rep. Bishop; Rep. McHenry; Rep. Pence; Rep. Gohmert; Rep. Johnson; Rep. Latta; Rep. Lucas and Rep. Lungren all spoke. In addition, four other RSC Members delivered one minutes on other topics: Rep. Pence spoke about the Fairness Doctrine; Rep. Pitts spoke about terrorists and Guantanamo Bay; Rep. Foxx spoke about the economy; and Rep. Poe spoke about peace in the Middle East.

On June 17, Rep. Lynn Westmoreland and Rep. Tom Price took to the floor during morning hour to discuss skyrocketing gas prices. In addition, on June 23, Rep. Price and Rep. Stearns also took to the floor to discuss skyrocketing gas prices.

On June 25, RSC Chairman Hensarling & Congressman Conaway led a special order to discuss their discharge petition to repeal Section 526 of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, as well as soaring gas prices and the need to provide real solutions to help provide American energy to families across the nation. Congressman Gingrey and Congressman Carter also participated.

In the News....

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

MORTGAGE VIPs

June 25, 2008

Do all Washington politicians get their loans directly from CEOs in the mortgage industry? Readers might be wondering after learning about Countrywide Financial and its VIP treatment for Senators Christopher Dodd (D., Conn.) and Kent Conrad (D., N.D.).

On Monday, we published Mr. Conrad's letter clarifying that he called former Fannie Mae Chairman and CEO Jim Johnson for assistance in finding a mortgage. Mr. Conrad thought it important to note that he only asked Countrywide Financial CEO Angelo Mozilo for a loan after Mr. Johnson, who happened to be standing nearby, passed the phone to Mr. Mozilo.

Mr. Conrad then recounted how he came to receive preferential treatment from the country's largest mortgage lender. The Senator evidently believes that his latest version of events, in which he gets a sweetheart mortgage from a CEO only after first contacting the former CEO of the largest wholesale purchaser of home mortgages, somehow makes his conduct appear more appropriate. Our readers who aren't pals with Mr. Johnson might have a more acute sense of Beltway favoritism.

Meanwhile, Politico.com has contacted all 100 members to see how they received their mortgages, on what terms and from whom. Politico's Eamon Javers tells us that he has met with surprising resistance, with many Senate press secretaries claiming that such details are private. And in fact such details are private, due to a loophole in Congressional financial disclosure rules.

Senators John Cornyn and Barbara Boxer have offered an amendment to the current housing bill to require such disclosure, and in the meantime most lawmakers are reluctantly sharing the details. Still, as we went to press, Mr. Javers reported that 15 members of the Senate were still refusing to tell the stories behind their mortgages.

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